

Office of Personnel Management

§ 591.229

§ 591.225 Which CPIs does OPM use?

OPM uses the following CPIs:

(a) For the Washington, DC, area—the BLS Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers (CPI-U);

(b) For all COLA areas in the State of Alaska—the BLS CPI-U for Anchorage, AK;

(c) For all COLA areas in the State of Hawaii and for Guam and the CNMI—the BLS CPI-U for Honolulu, HI; and

(d) For Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands—the Puerto Rico CPI as produced by the Puerto Rico Department of Work and Human Resources.

§ 591.226 How does OPM apply the CPIs?

(a) OPM uses a three-step process to adjust price indexes by relative annual or biennial changes in the CPIs. For steps 1 and 2, OPM computes the annual change by dividing the CPI from 1 year after the survey by the CPI from the time of the survey. OPM computes the biennial change by dividing the CPI from 2 years after the survey by the CPI from the time of the survey.

(1) *Step 1.* OPM computes the annual or biennial CPI change for the COLA area.

(2) *Step 2.* OPM computes the annual or biennial CPI change for the DC area.

(3) *Step 3.* OPM multiplies the COLA area price index from the last survey by the COLA area CPI change computed in step 1 divided by the DC area CPI change computed in step 2. The adjusted price index is rounded to the second decimal place.

(b) *Example:*

	2008	2009
COLA Area CPI	172.2	174.7
DC Area CPI	159.7	161.9
COLA Area Survey Index	117.33	(¹)
COLA Area CPI Adjusted Index	(²)	117.42

¹ No survey.

² N/A

Computation:

$117.33 \times (174.7/172.2)/(161.9/159.7) = 117.4159$, which would round to 117.42.

§ 591.227 What adjustment factors does OPM add to the price indexes?

OPM adds to the price index an adjustment factor that reflects differences in need, access to and availability of goods and services, and quality of life in the COLA area relative to

the DC area. The following table shows the adjustment factor for each area:

COLA area	Amount
Anchorage, AK	7.0
Fairbanks, AK	9.0
Juneau, AK	9.0
Rest of the State of Alaska	9.0
City and County of Honolulu, HI	5.0
Hawaii County, HI	7.0
Kauai County, HI	7.0
Maui County, HI	7.0
Guam and CNMI	9.0
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico	7.0
U.S. Virgin Islands	9.0

¹ Amount added to the price index.

§ 591.228 How does OPM convert the price index plus adjustment factor to a COLA rate?

(a) OPM converts the price index plus the adjustment factor to a COLA rate as shown in the following table:

Price index plus adjustment factor	COLA rate subject to paragraph (b) of this section
Equal to or greater than 124.50.	25 percent.
Equal to or greater than 102.00 but less than 124.50.	Price index plus the adjustment factor, minus 100, expressed to the nearest whole percent.
Less than 102.00	0 percent.

(b) This section is applicable on an area-by-area basis beginning with the effective date of the results of the first survey conducted in each area.

(c) OPM may reduce the COLA rate in any area by no more than 1 percentage point in any 12-month period. Any reduction in the COLA rate for any COLA area cannot be effective until the effective date of the first survey conducted in Hawaii and Guam and CNMI under these regulations.

§ 591.229 How does OPM inform agencies and employees of COLA rate changes?

OPM publishes COLA area survey summary reports, MEG and PEG indexes, and COLA rates in the FEDERAL REGISTER. OPM makes survey data and other information available to the public to the extent authorized by the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act.